

Opening Remarks by Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN-Habitat

The New Urban Agenda Platform: Strengthening Knowledge, Partnerships, and Engagement to Accelerate Progress at the Seventh Asia-Pacific Urban Forum

Tuesday 15 October 2019 at SETIA Spice Convention Centre, Penang

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am delighted to have this opportunity to welcome you to this important side-event, and to share my organization's progress on one of our core global initiatives at UN-Habitat, namely the New Urban Agenda Platform.

The New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal 11 places urbanization at the forefront of development policy, recognizing sustainable urbanizations' critical role for overall development and prosperity in both developed and developing countries. In September 2015, national governments adopted the 2030 Agenda with the 17 SDGs. In 2016, the NUA was launched and adopted by the Member States at the Habitat III in Quito, Ecuador.

Over the last three years, Governments, UN entities, global and regional organizations, and many other stakeholders— all represented in this room this morning—have been actively seeking innovative and effective ways to accelerate and scale-up progress in the implementation of the NUA and SDGs. Many efforts are also underway to monitor and make visible the progress so far.

Through monitoring we can collectively celebrate achievements and see where more effort is urgently needed.

In July this year, we launched in New York the Synthesis Report on Goal 11, which is the first report assessing performance towards achieving the SDG global targets on cities and human settlements. The synthesis report complements the 2018 Secretary General's first Quadrennial Report on progress made in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

The SDG 11 Synthesis Report and the Quadrennial Report were developed under the coordination of UN-Habitat, as the designated UN focal point for sustainable urbanization and human settlements, with the active collaboration with the UN Regional Commissions including UNESCAP, other UN Agencies, civil society, academia, European Commission, UCLG and many other stakeholders and partners

The New Urban Agenda Platform is a global network platform being developed by UN-Habitat, bringing together the above partners to facilitate and systematize the monitoring, reporting and knowledge-sharing on progress, and thereby accelerate the implementation of these global agendas.

The Platform will provide the necessary global system and foundations required for future preparations of future Quadrennial Reports through enabling regular updating and easy

access to information. This will enable preparation of a robust, comprehensive and collaborative structure for reporting on the 2022 Quadrennial Report and beyond.

The Platform will be launched at a Special Session of the 10th World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi 8-13 February 2020, that I would like to take this opportunity to warmly welcome you to the Forum.

UN-Habitat is making this investment to strengthen and foster existing and new partnerships for concrete actions in support of the NUA, as a transformative pathway to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Together with building a web-based platform, we are leading several key processes that will be shared through the Platform, which you will hear more about this morning from my team, including:

- Reporting Guidelines to help the Member States and partners prepare voluntary reports;
- An NUA indicators framework, to complement the SDGs monitoring framework process by including specific components of the NUA;
- A global urban indicator database, to provide a one-stop-shop for all urban-related data on all cities in the world with a population of more than 50,000 people;
- An expansion and systematization of our best practices database that will host different streams of practices worth sharing through a user-friendly and robust search engine; and
- NUA Illustrated with a suite of the online learning support package, to build the capacities of stakeholders on the content and principles of the NUA, in a simplified, accessible, visual and attractive way.

The NUA Platform will reinforce collaboration and coherence in support of the UN Systemwide Approach to Sustainable Urban Development by strengthening the connection with UNDESA SDG Knowledge and network platforms for knowledge generation and transfer in particular on SDG 11.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We firmly believe that effective implementation of the NUA and SDGs requires a wide range of approaches, innovations, enhanced advocacy, awareness-raising, mobilization of financial resources and capacity development, in addition to tools, frontier technologies, and improved access to accurate and timely data. This can only be achieved through partnerships.

The design of a successful Platform will be the result of a consultative process, which has started this year, including a multi-stakeholder's event in May 2019 during the first session of the UN-Habitat Assembly in Nairobi. Today's event is very significant as our first stakeholder engagement on this Platform in the Asia-Pacific region.

The momentum is building up for the launch of the Platform, and its success is dependent on your advice and engagement to ensure its relevance in support of your different knowledge requirements, and its synchronization with regional and country-level reporting mechanisms and platforms in Asia-Pacific.

We look forward to the presentations, ideas, and discussion today on how the Platform can contribute and be maximized to help cities and communities transform, engage, and accelerate the implementation of NUA and SDGs in the Asia Pacific and globally.

Thank you.